

To the members of the Education Committee:

I am writing in opposition to Raised Bill 5322, AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A HUMAN SERVICES PERMIT AND A REQUIREMENT THAT SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS CONDUCT HOME VISITS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR as it is currently drafted. I urge that the creation of a bachelor's level permit be dropped and this bill reconstructed to indicate that only licensed and credentialed professional masters-level practitioners be allowed to deliver mental health services in our schools.

As a Licensed Professional Counselor in private practice, I am well aware of the mental health crisis in our nation, and the effect of overwhelming social and emotional pressures interfering with children's ability to learn. However, while bachelor's level mental health workers could ostensibly provide a supportive role in schools, they are NOT licensed mental health professionals -- licensed professional counselors, licensed social workers, or licensed marriage and family therapists -- with the requisite training and supervised pre and post graduate experience that renders our field of professionals trained and competent to provide mental health care.

This bill, while honorably seeking to meet a glaring need for our children, attempts to do so by taking a shortcut that while perhaps perceived as cost-saving, could potentially do more damage to our children by leaving their mental health care in the hands of people who absolutely do not have the requisite credentials to actually provide mental health care.

I urge you to remove this provision and require that anyone providing mental health counseling in our schools be fully licensed and credentialed professionals.

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If you are experiencing a mental health emergency and need immediate assistance, please call 911, go to your nearest emergency room or utilize a crisis service such as those listed below.

CT Crisis Line 211

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline phone number is 800-273-8255, operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The transgender Trans Lifeline # is 877-565-8860. The teen crisis text line is 741-741. The Trevor Project crisis line for LGBTQIA youth is 866-488-7386.

Springfield Crisis Services (BHN): 413-733-6661

Northampton Crisis Services (CSO): 413-586-5555

Greenfield Crisis Services (CSO): 413-774-5411

Athol Crisis Services (CSO): 978-249-3141

Crisistextline.org

24/7 anonymous service. Text: START to 741-741 when in crisis.

No matter how **BIG** or **LITTLE** your problem may seem.

Teenlineonline.org

Call, text or email to speak with another teen.

Hours are 6pm - 9pm PST (California) (9 pm to midnight Eastern time)

Text: TEEN to 839863

Phone: 310-855-4673 or 800-852-8336

Email: Go to [Teenlineonline.org](https://www.teenlineonline.org) and click email

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